SECTION 5.—EDUCATION.

Unpopularity of education—Mission work—School at Kpong—Necessity for education—Proposed stock farm—Pure-bred bull—Mr Henry Bethell's comments on development of the Masai.

Perhaps in no direction do the Masai demonstrate their conservatism more clearly than in their disinclination to emerge from ancestral custom and tradition by means of education. The whole system of tribal life is against progress and education appears to be generally unpopular among young and old alike. The elders deprecate such an innovation as applied to the boys, as they desire to keep their children at home for work with the sheep and cattle in order that they may live at ease while their sons do the work, and the Murran resent the idea of any system of control and would not willingly submit to a discipline in order to assimilate a knowledge of which they consider they stand in no need. This attitude of the Masai has no doubt been responsible for the almost total absence of Missionary activity in the reserve.

Unpopularity of education

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One or two members of the Masai tribe have attended Mission Schools, notably the African Inland Mission at Kijabe, but it cannot be said that the results of such instruction have invariably been successful. There are no established Missions in the reserve, though attempts have been made by certain Missionary bodies to obtain from the Masai permission to start a station. These attempts have met with no encouragement from the Masai and nothing has been done.

Mission work

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During 1917, a school was opened in the neighbourhood of Kpong Station under the auspices of the Church of Scotland Mission, Kikuyu. This school was placed under the tutelage of a native teacher and about forty Masai children attend daily. Reading and writing in Masai and a little arithmetic are taught as well as the rudiments of agriculture, and as far as it goes this school may be considered to be a success, but it cannot be said that its establishment has gone any distance in solving the problem of the education of the Masai or of removing their aversion to the introduction of this means of disseminating civilisation, by rendering them as a whole amenable to Missionary influence.

School at Kpong

Mr. Hemsted has repeatedly given it as his opinion that the education of the Masai is one of the most important steps that must be taken in order to weaken the conservatism of the tribe and induce them to emerge from their old and antiquated habits. The moral and physical degeneration of the tribe that was a natural result of the aimlessness of their existence and the want of a definite occupation could only be remedied by the provision of an object upon which their attention might be concentrated. In September, 1913, he asked that money might be set aside for the erection and maintenance of a native school, but this money was not forthcoming. [illegible] the Agricultural Department should give instruction to the tribe in the improved methods of tending and breeding stock, but these fell through before completion. In August, 1914, it was suggested that provision should be made for a Veterinary Officer to be stationed permanently in the reserve who would, in addition to veterinary work, impart a course of instruction in the care of stock, paying special attention to the method of dipping. This scheme also fell through owing to the lack of available funds following the outbreak of war.

Necessity for education

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In January, 1917, Mr. Hemsted submitted proposals for the establishment of a stock-farm for the Masai. It was, he said, generally agreed that the policy of the Government in regard to the Masai was to develop them as pastoralists and to recognise the reserve as a source of supply of cattle and sheep for the European parts of the Protectorate, and also eventually for export. One of the first essentials of such a policy would be to induce the Masai to aim at quality rather than quantity. Under existing conditions, the reserve was stocked with cattle of a most inferior quality, among them being an undue proportion of bullocks and aged and barren cows. Experience gained in connection with the purchase of supplies for the military authorities showed that a comparatively small number of their animals could be considered to be of the quality desirable for food purposes. In the old days, when the Masai were able to roam over the greater part of East Africa and there was little or no demand for their stock, the number of cattle they kept was immaterial. In those days the breed of their cattle benefited by the constant introduction of fresh blood obtained in the numerous raids they

Proposed stock farm

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